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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0744
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1984
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 6035
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4283
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2216
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
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SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT - MARCH 11

Leading Stories

1. Following yesterday's global market gains, Chile's stock market registered its most significant rise in the last five months. Dailies also report that according to a University of Lima survey, 59% of Peruvians approve of the free trade agreement between Peru and Chile.

U.S.-Related News

2. U.S. Ambassador Paul Simons emphasized Chile's sound economic management and said that the global economic crisis "is a difficult moment, but it is also an opportunity to expand markets, bring new products, and keep up the optimism" (La Nacion, government-owned, editorially independent, 3/11).

3. In a breakfast at his residence to present the United States as the special guest of the Trade One 2009 fair in November, the Ambassador expressed his concern with the expansion of protectionism and said the G20 "is committed to resisting protectionism" and will try to keep markets open (El Mercurio, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record, circ. 129,000, 3/11).

4. Ten Chilean high school students will travel to the United States through the Youth Ambassadors Program. 17-year old Andres Vargas is proud that a community as small as his has its own ambassador to the United States. "I want to represent my country and learn more about American culture," he said. The students will visit the White House, Congress, and meet with U.S. representatives. Asked about the possibility of meeting Michelle Obama, Vargas said, "It would be a very life-enriching experience" (Las Ultimas Noticias, leading-circulation, popular, circ. 140,000; La Tercera, 3/11).

5. The article, "The Chilean on Clinton's Staff," states Carla Menares works at the State Department in the office responsible for monitoring trafficking in persons. She described Chile as an "origin, transit, and destination for trafficking in persons," but added that it's hard to say if this is a "massive" activity or not, because it is a type of crime that is kept secret. Menares said that Chile has made progress, but must augment trials against the traffickers, "not just in regard to sexual exploitation, but also forced labor, which we see in agriculture and domestic services" (El Mercurio's Ya magazine, 3/11).

Cuba

¶6. Several Defense Ministers attending the UNASUR South America Defense Council meeting in Santiago stated the United States should lift the commercial embargo on Cuba. "Evidently, the reincorporation of one country that was expelled far too many years ago and is a pending issue in the region," said Argentine Defense Minister Nilda Garre. The host, Chilean Minister Jose Goni said, "Chile believes as a matter of principle that the American community must include all its members" (La Tercera, conservative, independent, circ. 101,000, 3/11)

¶7. Foreign Affairs Minister Alejandro Foxley met with Senate Foreign Affairs Committee officials. Reportedly, in that meeting Foxley gave a detailed account of Bachelet's trip to Cuba in February and the senators expressed their objection to the purpose of the trip and its aftermath, which hurt Chile's image abroad (El Mercurio, 3/11).

Terrorist

¶8. Colombia released new evidence that the FARC was in coordination with an array of leftist and subversive organizations in the region to promote the "Bolivarian Revolution," reported "El Tiempo de Bogota." This would include Chile's Leftist Revolutionary Movement, MIR (El Mercurio, 3/11).

¶9. The Carabineros police identified 13 locations in the city that could be the target of violent demonstrations on the Day of the Young Combatant on March 29. A recent bomb that detonated in a car dealer in Providencia triggered a preventive police plan (El Mercurio, 3/11).

Environment

¶10. A World Bank report supports the use of hydroelectric power and the construction of hydroelectric plants -- such as the HydroAysen dam project in southern Chile -- as the cheapest and environmentally friendliest means for Latin America to fight the greenhouse gas effect (El Mercurio, 3/11).

SIMONS